

support. Through just this one site, you can access the *Federal Register*, the *Congressional Record*, the *Commerce Business Daily*, and many more publications. It doesn't get more convenient than that."

In a May 15, 1998, letter to Public Printer Michael DiMario, Vice President Al Gore congratulated GPO "for the excellent customer service you are providing through your website." The Vice President said, "your organization continues to serve as an excellent model for other Federal agencies on how to provide an interesting and easy-to-use website, providing consumers hassle-free access to Government services. Your innovative web site encourages consumers to contact your agency and to take advantage of the many services which you provide."

The *Government Executive* award was one of many that have been won by *GPO Access*. Others include a 1994 Technology Leadership Award and the 1995 James Madison Award. In 1997, *GPO Access* and the Commerce Department jointly earned a Hammer Award from Vice President Gore's National Performance Review for creating the new electronic *Commerce Business Daily*, known as *CBDNet*.

Also, in a 1998 review of *GPO Access*, *Federal Computer Week* magazine said, "in a web environment overrun by sites that are the equivalent of a Hollywood movie set, where style takes precedence over substance, the GPO site stands out as an unassuming, information-rich offering."

## Public Use Of Online Budget Jumped More Than 500 Percent

As President Clinton's Fiscal Year 1999 Budget was released for sale to the public in GPO bookstores and through telephone mail orders in early 1998, thousands of Americans were reviewing the individual budget documents through *GPO Access*.

The public's use of the online budget in 1998 contrasted sharply with the use of the online budget the year before. In 1997, the budget documents were released online the same day paper copies went on sale from GPO. At that time, first day sales were 7,918 copies while *GPO Access* hits for the budget documents were 10,149.

In 1998, the paper budget and the online documents were again released the same day. This time, however, 7,390 paper copies were sold, while *GPO Access* hits for the budget documents jumped to 64,428, an increase of 535 percent.

## New Computer-To-Plate Technology Reduces Costs, Improves Quality

In 1998, GPO acquired state-of-the-art computer-to-plate technology that will dramatically reduce costs, improve press-ready plate quality, and expedite the processing of prepress work. The acquisition of the two computer-to-plate (CTP) systems for \$1.4 million will generate savings to the taxpayer of \$7.3 million in just 3 years. The new systems are scheduled to be fully operational in 1999.

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With the recent development of large-format laser imaging devices that transfer imposed image computer files onto metal offset printing plates, and with the achievement of increased imaging speeds, CTP systems have evolved to the point where they are now cost-effective, time-saving, and reliable devices for the demanding work performed by GPO. The new equipment will accept electronic input for platemaking directly from GPO's automated composition systems.

Establishing networked, high-speed, fully automated platemaking capabilities saves substantial labor costs. CTP technology makes it possible to send electronic text and image files directly to automated platemaking devices, eliminating the need for film negatives and the additional labor-intensive manual processes of stripping and imposing those negatives onto goldenrod for conventional platemaking. It will also ensure consistently high quality plates. As a result, GPO will be able to deliver the same volume of quality print products to Congress and Federal agency customers at a significantly reduced labor cost.

CTP technology saves in other ways as well. For example, it reduces the material costs for film and associated chemicals. And, by reducing the disposal and/or recycling of film and associated processing chemicals, it reduces hazards to the environment. Savings will be achieved by reducing the operating and maintenance costs of current film-processing and platemaking equipment. Total space requirements will also be reduced with the new

equipment. In addition, the new equipment will give GPO the capability for electronic storage of imposed signatures.

The new CTP equipment will be used to process the *Congressional Record*, the *Federal Register*, the *Code of Federal Regulations*, the *U.S. Code*, the *Budget of the United States*, and patents-related publications, as well as most congressional bills, reports, and documents. The devices will include the capability to automatically process at least three different plate sizes, making them suitable for use on a wide variety of GPO products. The acquisition of this equipment means that GPO's prepress processes will be totally electronic from submission of the information to the creation of the offset plate.

#### **GPO Acquires New U.S. Passport Binding Line**

During the year, GPO began the acquisition process for a new binding line for the production of U.S. passports. The new system, scheduled to be delivered in 1999, will replace equipment which has been in place since 1986. The GPO produces all U.S. passports for the State Department.

GPO's new passport binding line will provide the needed capability to keep up with the increased demand for U.S. passports. It is part of GPO's long-term partnership with the State Department to provide efficient, timely, high-quality, and high-security production services for U.S. passports.

The current GPO passport line, which will be retained as backup